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CDC Modifies Guidance on Isolation and Quarantine

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by Andrew Glassman

On Monday evening (12/27/21) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) significantly modified its guidance for isolation and quarantine by people with COVID-19. This change in guidance is instructive for employers in the determination of their policies associated with COVID-19 workplace protocols.

The CDC now recommends that the time for isolation from the public by people with COVID-19 may be shortened from 10 days to 5 days *if the individual with Covid 19 is asymptomatic* - with that individual then wearing a mask for an additional 5 days when around others. The CDC states that, based on its review of the scientific data that has been accumulated to date, the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs 1-2 days prior to an individual exhibiting symptoms, and for a period of 2-3 days after symptoms subside. Thus, people who test positive but are asymptomatic can safely end quarantine after 5 days if they continue to wear a mask for an additional 5 days.

The CDC has also recommended that those who were exposed to COVID-19 but who are unsure of their status should isolate according to the following: (i) if not vaccinated or if more than 6 months from the date of a second mRNA dose or more than 2 months after a J & J dose and not boosted, then either 5 days of quarantine followed by 5 days of mask wearing or, if unable to quarantine, then 10 days of mask wearing; (ii) if vaccinated and boosted, no quarantine is necessary but a period of 10 days of mask wearing is recommended.

The CDC continues to recommend a post-exposure test as “best practice.”

For employers considering modifying their current policies, it is important to continue to balance the impact isolation and quarantine have on the workforce and the ability to get the work done versus the risks of failing to eradicate COVID-19 from their plants and facilities. Continued adherence to social

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distancing and mask-wearing protocols should continue to be monitored and enforced as the best way to reduce the spread of this virus.

The CDC Media Statement is available [here](#).

The Labor and Employment Attorneys at Pullman & Comley routinely advise employers on how best to balance the needs of employers and the health and safety of their workers.

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